

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6297

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 26, 2000

Title: An act relating to graduate student assistants' tuition exemptions.

Brief Description: Changing graduate student assistants' tuition exemptions.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Shin, McAuliffe, Sheahan and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/21/2000, 1/26/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6297 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Bauer, Horn, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: Currently, students with graduate student appointments must work 20 hours per week on that appointment to be eligible for a tuition waiver. Some appointments are not consistent across academic terms causing students' work assignments to drop below the 20 hour requirement.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Students who hold a graduate service appointment involving not less than ten hours per week are eligible for a tuition waiver. Resident students holding a graduate service appointment involving not less than ten hours per week may be granted a waiver of all or a portion of resident tuition. Nonresident students holding a graduate service appointment involving not less than ten hours per week may be granted a waiver of all or a portion of the nonresident fee differential. Resident students who hold fellowships or trainee positions become eligible for waivers under this program.

An intent section clarifies that students with less than full-time appointments are not expected to work beyond the terms of their contract.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Intent language is added. Tuition waivers are available for students with fellowships or trainee positions at the college or university.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2000.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The change allows greater flexibility to the institutions when granting TA appointments to graduate students. This would be a great recruitment tool.

Support comes from all six administrations and faculty groups on all campuses.

Testimony Against: Some students oppose the bill because they fear abuse of the half-time appointments. Students often work beyond the current 20-hour appointment. This is a concern around the nation. Some students are very concerned about their pay and are unhappy they were not consulted. They need protection from abuse.

An amendment to allow tuition waivers to students defined as trainee– or fellow– was suggested by UW.

Testified: PRO: Barbara Mathers-Schmidt, CFR, WWU; Matt Carol, CFR, WSU; Joanna Taracani, CFR, UW; Dave Asher, UW; Marsha Landolt, UW Graduate Dean; CON: Lea Kent, GPSS, UW.